

Never to Be Forgotten:

Suggestions for Writing Family Stories

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Agenda

- Introduction
- Why write family stories
- Why type should you write
 - Article
 - Biography
 - Book
- Book layout
- What materials will you use

Introduction: writing will lead to more research

Writing family stories can be rewarding and bring you closer to those individuals you have spent years researching. It can also help you analyze your research and give you additional ideas for further research. The main reason I write family stories, if I may get personal for a moment, is I believe no one should be forgotten. Since you have done the research, you are the perfect person to write the stories of your ancestors and collateral relatives. It may be difficult, and it will be time consuming but when you finish you will be introducing future generations to those individuals you have grown to know.

Where Do You Get the Information?

If you personally knew the individual it is much easier to write about them. If you did not know the individual or were not able to talk with them, you will need to rely on other individuals or the documents you have gathered on them. Your years of research will be your main source of information. Hopefully over time you have had an opportunity to talk to various family members and glean information from them. Census, vital records, obituaries, probate records will be some of the records you can draw information from to create a biography or family history. Along with county histories, city directories and newspaper articles can also flesh out a history.

What Type Should You Write?

Blog

Blog articles are short, and you may be a bit more personal with the information you provide. However, you may have to spend a lot of time keeping them current. Many a blog has gone unattended over the years and eventually dies.

Articles

Articles take a bit longer to write but once it is written it is done and you do not have to update the story. An article can be placed in various publications or can be placed online with your family tree. If you wish to place your article in a publication, I suggest placing it in publications of historical or

genealogical societies in the areas where your ancestors lived. It is a good idea to contact the society to find out what their publication guidelines are.

Articles can be a biography, a specific event which happened in a family or clarify misinformation on a family line. It can be about anything you wish to write about. Whatever type of article you write always include footnotes or endnotes. Also, have someone proof-read your article to catch those mistakes we all make. Include pictures with your article and label the pictures as well. Pictures can be of individuals or the homes in which the individuals lived. To prove a point documents can be included in the article.

Books

Writing a book is challenging. It will take a lot of time so be patient. As you write you may discover you have not done enough research so writing will stop while you do additional research. Because of this it may take years to compile and write a book.

You need to decide what type of book to write. Will it be about an individual, a family or multiple families. If about multiple families how will the book be organized? Will it be organized as a descendency or ancestral book? What type of numbering system will you use so people can move easily through the book to find their family member?

Some things to include for everyone:

- Vital statistics
- Important events
- Occupations
- Military service
- Hobbies
- Where did they live
- Good time and bad times
- Pictures

Whatever you write about don't embarrass family members. Do you want to include information about living Individuals? If so, you should get permission to use their information. What follows are parts of a book which can or cannot be included.

Title Page	The title of the book would appear on this page but also the authors name and date of publication.
Table of Contents	Indicates how the book is broken down and the pages numbers for each division. It is important you get the page numbers for each division correct.
Forward	The forward can be used for personal commentary. You can explain why you wrote the book, how you got involved in family history, what records you used or anything interesting which occurred while you were researching or writing.
Introduction	This section can be used to explain for whom the book intended. You can also introduce a short general history of family or maybe the area in which they lived.
Chapters	These are the meat of your book. Include names, vital information, appropriate stories, pictures and be sure to footnote. As a suggestion, write each chapter as a separate file so it will be easier to write and share.

Acknowledgements	Name those who helped you with the creation of your masterpiece. Identify those who supplied pictures and list the repositories you used to gather your records and information.
Index	In my opinion this is the most important part of your book. When looking at a family history book most people want that name index. You can create your own or have the computer program your using create it for you. It should be an every name index.

Footnote\Endnote Help

Elizabeth Shown Mills

<https://www.evidenceexplained.com/quicktips/choosing-citation-style>

FamilySearch

[https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Citations_\(Evidence_Style\)](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Citations_(Evidence_Style))

Cite Your Sources (FamilySearch)

[https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Cite_Your_Sources_\(Source_Footnotes\)](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Cite_Your_Sources_(Source_Footnotes))

Chicago/Turabian Basics

<https://www.easybib.com/guides/citation-guides/chicago-turabian/footnotes/>

Chicago Style

<https://www.scribbr.com/chicago-style/website-citations/>